

## History of Duluth, and of St. Louis County, to the year 1870 /

**HISTORY OF DULUTH, AND OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY, TO THE YEAR 1870.\* BY HON. JOHN R. CAREY.**

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When we take into account, in this rapidly advancing age, the many years, and I may say centuries, since the vast wealth and resources afforded to man by the great lake Superior and the country surrounding it became known, their settlement and development seem surprisingly slow.

While trading posts, missionary stations, and other small settlements, had been made within the boundaries of northeastern Minnesota at different dates, from the first advent of the white man in 1659, yet the first effort as to settlement of any part of that region, by the building of towns and cities, was not made until about the year 1854; after a lapse of nearly two hundred years, since the visit of the intrepid explorers. Groseilliers and Radisson, who are said to have been the first white men to visit Minnesota.

### **DANIEL GREYSELON DU LHUT.**

Next in line of those early worthies, we have that noble and intrepid soldier and leader, Daniel Greyselton Du Lhut, a native of France and a prominent and influential man: That name (Du Luth, as it is better spelled in English) is destined to exist as long as the city

which bears it as its name shall continue as the great commercial gateway of Minnesota and the Northwest. 16

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Some prominent merchants of Quebec and Montreal, with the support of the governor of Canada, formed a company in 1678, and organized an expedition for the purpose of continuing the trade among the Indians in New France which had already been opened by Groseilliers and others in the preceding twenty years, but which for a time had been interrupted. Du Luth, being a prominent man and an officer of the governor's guards, was chosen as leader of the expedition. An ordinance or law promulgated by the governor of Canada then existed against trading with the Sioux; "the king's subjects were forbidden to go into the remote forests there to trade with the Indians." This ordinance was issued, doubtless, for the reason of the dangers to which the traders and missionaries would be exposed in consequence of the bloody strife that existed between some bands of the Sioux and the Ojibways of the country bordering the lake. However, the temptation was so great to procure the furs, notwithstanding the law and the hostility of the Indians, that the governor general, who was probably an interested party in the scheme, winked at the contraband trade. It is probable, also, that among the Indians there was some hostility to the trade, for it is related that Randin visited the extremity of lake Superior and distributed presents to them in the name of Frontenac, the governor, to secure their favor and to open a way for Du Luth and his party to trade with them.

Du Luth started on his mission with a party of seventeen Frenchmen and three Indians, on the 1st of September, 1678. In the spring of 1679, after wintering with his party in the woods about nine miles from the Sault Ste Marie, he wrote to Frontenac that he would remain in the Sioux country until further orders, and that, when peace was concluded, he would set up the king's arms, lest the English and other Europeans who settled toward California should take possession of the country.

There has been so much written relating to Du Luth that I will forbear giving an extended account of his life and services. Suffice it to say that he was a leader of men, a man of unblemished moral character and undaunted courage, a hater of the whisky traffic among the Indians, a resolute and true soldier, and a fearless supporter and vindicator of law and order.

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It is believed by many that Du Luth established the first trading post at the head of lake Superior, but the writer can find no definite record of the fact. There can be no doubt but that he visited and traded with the Indians at Fond du Lac, and that he also traveled over the canoe route and portages between Fond du Lac and Sandy lake.

### **FOND DU LAC.**

Jean Baptiste Cadotte, a man of influence and possessed of a liberal education, in the year 1792 was employed by the Northwest Fur Company, and was in charge of the Fond du Lac post. The country tributary to this post comprised the sources of the Mississippi, St. Croix and Chippewa rivers. The depot or post was then located about three miles above the entry of the St. Louis river, on the Wisconsin shore of Superior bay, where that part of the present city of Superior known as Roy's Addition is situated. This post or fort was a collecting point. It was surrounded with strong cedar pickets driven into the ground, the burnt ends of many of which remained projecting from the earth in 1855, and were many times seen by the writer. The Fond du Lac of those early times was known, in translation to English, as the Head of the Lake.

Several of the buildings of the Fond du Lac trading post, as it was later occupied by the American Fur Company, on the northern side of the St. Louis river, in Minnesota, were yet in existence and in a good state of preservation in 1855, and for many years thereafter.

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In 1854 and 1855, when the great rush came for the control or a share in the site of the future great city at the head of the lake, Fond du Lac was the only place having a name as a town or village. It was looked upon by the early pioneers of St. Paul as a place of much importance, as the lake port for Minnesota. Our old pioneer, Gen. William G. Le Duc, now of Hastings, Minn., in his Minnesota Year Book for 1851, published at St. Paul, thus mentions it: "Fond du Lac is a very old settlement on the St. Louis river, twenty-two miles from its entrance into lake Superior. Fond du Lac is destined to be a place of great importance, its situation making it the lake port of Minnesota. Steamboats and vessels find no difficulty 244 in ascending the St. Louis to Fond' du Lac." The general's prophecy is now verified, as it is a part of the city of Duluth.

### **TREATIES WITH THE OJIBWAYS.**

On the 5th day of August, 1826, Gov. Lewis Cass and T. L. McKinney, commissioners appointed by the United States government, met with the Ojibway Indians at Fond du Lac, Minn., and concluded the first formal treaty with these Indians. It is related that a few days earlier, on the 28th of July, 1826, the commissioners approached this trading post in their barges, with flying colors and music, and then, for the first time, the Ojibways of that region heard the tune "Hail, Columbia." The principal effect of that treaty was to give the United States the right to explore for and carry away any metals or minerals that might be found along the country bordering the lake.

In August, 1847, by a treaty concluded at Fond du Lac, by J. A. Verplanck and Henry M. Rice, as the commissioners on the part of the United States, all of the land west and southwest from the head of the lake was ceded to the United States. And in September, 1854, by the treaty made at La Pointe, Wis., the remainder of the country along the north shore of the lake and the northern boundary of the state was ceded.

### **COUNTIES OF NORTHEASTERN MINNESOTA.**

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Here I desire to refer to some legislation in the early days of the Territory of Minnesota, relating to the formation of counties in the northern part of our state. Itasca county, established by an act of the first territorial legislature, approved October 27, 1849, embraced that part of Minnesota bordering on lake Superior and reaching west to the upper Mississippi river and the Lake of the Woods. It was quite large enough for a good-sized state. From this area were subsequently carved out three whole counties, St. Louis, Lake, and Cook, and parts of Aitkin and Beltrami, leaving the county of Itasca yet large enough to make several fair-sized counties.

St. Louis county was established by acts of the territorial legislature which were approved March 3, 1855, and March 1, 245 1856. It takes its name from the St. Louis river, the largest entering lake Superior, which flows through this county. It had a population of only 406 in the year 1860, and 4,561 in 1870; but in 1895, according to the state census, its population was 78,575. This county comprises an area of 6,611.75 square miles, being the largest one of the eighty-two counties of this state.

An earlier county that had included this area, named Superior county, established by the territorial legislature on February 20th, 1855, was imperfectly defined. Its name was changed to St. Louis by the acts of 1855 and 1856.

### **ROAD FROM THE ST. CROIX VALLEY TO LAKE SUPERIOR.**

On October 20th, 1849, the territorial legislature memorialized Congress for the construction of a road from Point Douglas, at the mouth of the St. Croix, by way of Cottage Grove, Stillwater, and Marine Mills, passing near the falls of the St. Croix, and crossing Snake river near Pokegama lake, and thence continuing on the most practicable route to the falls of the St. Louis river. On November 1st, 1849, the territorial legislature memorialized Congress, "That the convenience and interest of the people of the Territory would clearly justify the establishment of a mail route from the Falls of St. Croix by way of Pokegama to Fond du Lac, the head of lake Superior." The memorial further represented

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that the distance from the falls of the St. Croix to Fond du Lac was but a little more than a hundred miles, that the country was being rapidly settled along the first half of the route, and that a large settlement already existed at Fond du Lac, where the inhabitants were destitute of mail facilities.

In 1854, through the efforts of our delegate in Congress, Hon. Henry M. Rice, an appropriation of money was obtained from Congress for constructing the proposed road, and the mail route was also established. Unfortunately, however, the point designated in the memorials as the northern end of both the road and mail route was cheated out of any direct benefit, because when opened and used they ended eight or ten miles from Fond du Lac, the intended terminus of both. The people interested in Superior City, Wis. (then to be the great city of destiny at the head of Lake Superior), concluded that it was 246 the Fond du Lac mentioned in the memorials. It may be that they were then debating upon the propriety of naming the embryo city Fond du Lac, as a compliment to the old trading post which fifty years before had been removed from Wisconsin to the head of navigation on the St. Louis river where it became Fond du Lac, Minnesota. However this was, the Superior people, who were at this time largely made up of St. Paul hustlers, decided that they would not lose the terminus of this road and mail route; so in January, 1854, they organized a force of choppers and set them at work in cutting out a winter road on the proposed line from Superior to what was then known as Chase's camp, on the St. Croix river, a distance of abrupt fifty or sixty miles. This road was then blazoned on maps as the "Military Road" from Point Douglas to Superior. At the session of Congress in that year an appropriation of \$20,000 was granted for opening this road, and subsequently other appropriations were granted by Congress for completing it. Through the controlling influence at Washington and St. Paul of those interested in Superior, that town maintained its supremacy as the coming great city for about twelve years, until, in 1866, Minnesota woke up to her great interest at the head of lake Superior and active steps were taken for the construction of the Lake Superior and Mississippi railroad to Duluth.

## EARLY MISSIONARIES.

A biographic sketch of Rev. Edmund F. Ely, the pioneer teacher and missionary at Fond du Lac, whom I knew well during twenty years, has been written for me by his son, Henry S. Ely, of Duluth, as follows: "Edmund Franklin Ely was born at Wilbraham, Mass., August 3rd, 1809, and died in Santa Rosa, California, August 29th, 1882. He made profession of religion in Rome, N. Y., in 1827. In 1828 he commenced study with a view of the gospel ministry. Dependent upon his own efforts for the means of defraying his necessary expenses, he devoted part of his time to teaching....In 1882 the American Board of Foreign Missions established mission stations on lake Superior, and Mr. Ely, whose health at that time was poor, accepted their invitation to go to that country as an assistant teacher. He was subsequently appointed 247 teacher and catechist, expecting to return in two years to resume his studies, but the way never opened for his return. He left Albany, N. Y., July 5th, 1833. On reaching Mackinaw, he found that the missionaries who had preceded him had departed with a company of Indian traders. He was forwarded by Henry R. Schoolcraft, then the Indian agent, and in three days overtook the boats on lake Superior. At that time there were no vessels on that lake. Mr. Ely was assigned to the branch of the mission among the Ojibways of the upper Mississippi, under the direction of Rev. William T. Boutwell, and proceeded to Sandy lake, where, after a short time, he was left by Mr. Boutwell, with the joint duties of missionary and teacher resting upon him. In the summer of 1834 the school was removed from Sandy lake to Fond du Lac, a village on the St. Louis river at the head of navigation, where a school house had been built by Mr. Ely. In 1835 a reinforcement of teachers was sent by the mission board. One of them, Miss Catherine Gonlais, soon became the wife of Mr. Ely. Here they labored until May, 1839, when they removed to Pokegama. ... In a letter written by Mr. Ely in 1881, he says: 'When I first entered the mission work at lake Superior, that portion of the country was included in the Territory of Michigan. After Michigan was admitted as a state, the Territory of Wisconsin was organized, Minnesota at that time being Indian territory. The first party of white men I saw were lumbermen engaged in their business on the waters of the St.

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Croix, in the year 1838. ... The Indian titles to lands about the head of lake Superior were not extinguished till 1854. At that time we had left the mission and removed to St. Paul, but, being thoroughly conversant with the country, I went to lake Superior, took up lands where the town of Superior was located, and assisted in surveying and laying out the town. In 1855 the Indian title was extinguished on the Minnesota side of the harbor, and I went over there and laid out the town of Oneota as a commercial site, built a steam mill and docks, and held the position of postmaster for six years, also that of notary public under the governor of the Territory. The financial reverses of 1857 rendered our property valueless, and in 1862 we returned to St. Paul.”

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Fond du Lac, now a part of the City of Duluth, was the only mission station established in that part of Minnesota bordering lake Superior. Besides Mr. and Mrs. Ely, other missionaries and teachers were located there. In the year 1840 the Methodist denomination sent missionaries and teachers among the Ojibways of the lake region and northern Minnesota. In 1841 George Copway, an Ojibway, his wife, who was a white woman, her sister, and James Simpson, were engaged in the mission work at Fond du Lac. It would seem that soon after this, for some cause many of the Indians must have left Fond du Lac, as we learn that in 1849 Rev. J. W. Holt and his wife, the last missionaries we see any mention of at Fond du Lac, had only twenty-eight scholars enrolled in their school, with an average attendance of only fifteen.

The first marriage we learn of as having been performed in accordance with the Christian and civilized form, and as taking place at Fond du Lac, within what is at present the city of Duluth, was that of Rev. W. T. Boutwell (one of those early missionaries) to Hester Crooks, on the 11th day of September, 1834. Hester Crooks was the daughter of Ramsay Crooks, a prominent fur trader, and an Indian mother. Miss Crooks had been a teacher at the mission station at Yellow Lake, Wisconsin, and probably was a graduate of the mission boarding school at Mackinaw.

### THE FIRST ELECTION.

Before Duluth was platted or had occasion for a name, on the first Tuesday in October, 1855, there was held the first election in St. Louis county. The election was for a delegate to represent the Territory in Congress.

The election for all Minnesota at the head of the lake was held in the log house or "claim shanty," as such buildings were commonly called, owned by George E. Nettleton as a trading house or post, situated on the main land near the base of Minnesota point, about 400 feet from the shore of the lake, and about 150 feet east of First avenue east in the present city of Duluth. The house was one-story, about fourteen by eighteen feet, and seven feet high at the sides; it had a scooped log roof, one door and one window. This log house was built 249 by Mr. Nettleton before the treaty with the Ojibway Indians at La Pointe in September, 1854.

On the morning of the day of the election, the writer, living, like the majority at that time, in Superior, but claiming a residence on their land claims in Minnesota, left Oneota, now a part of Duluth, in a row-boat, in company with eight or nine other voters, for the voting place, a distance of about four miles by land or seven by water. There was then nor even a trail by land between Oneota and Nettleton's claim, Where now the electric street car makes the run in fifteen minutes. Had we then taken the land route, the density of the forest, the crossing of streams, and the climbing of rocky ridges would have compelled us, even if we reached the polling place in time to vote, to camp out over night before our return. None of the party were then acquainted with the extent and intricacies of the marsh which skirted the base of Minnesota point and the head of Superior bay; so we concluded to land on Minnesota point at the old Indian burying place, about three miles from the voting place. There we left our boat and walked up along the lake shore to the place where we exercised the sovereign right of the American citizen.

On arriving at Nettleton's "claim shanty," we found a cosmopolitan congregation, made up principally, however, of Yankees, Buckeyes, Kentuckians, Wolverines, Badgers, etc., not forgetting Canadians, French, Irish, Dutch, and Scandinavians, with a fair representation of the Ojibways, minus the blanket, but bedecked with coat and pants, as an evidence of their qualification to vote. My recollection is that 105 votes were polled, 96 for Henry M. Rice, the Democratic candidate, and 9 for William R. Marshall, the opposition or Republican candidate. From that election may be dated the birth of the Republican party in the state.

At that time, from Superior, Wis., radiated nearly all of the squatters upon unsurveyed lands, in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. The people in Superior at that time and for some years after, took more interest in elections and political matters in Minnesota than they did in their own state. Superior was then the political headquarters for figuring and laying out plans for an election to an office from northeastern Minnesota.

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### **MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE.**

Reuben B. Carlton, after whom Carlton county was named, was the first farmer and blacksmith sent among the Indians of Minnesota. He came to Fond du Lac about the year 1849. After the adoption of the state constitution in August, 1857, at the election for members of the state legislature in October following, Mr. Carlton was elected to the first state senate, and John S. Watrous to the first house of representatives. Mr. Carlton was part owner of the townsite of Fond du Lac, and was one of the first trustees of that town under the act of its incorporation in 1857. The other trustees were Alexander Paul, now deceased; D. George Morrison, then and now living at Superior, Wis.; J. B. Culver, then living at Duluth; and Francis Roussain, living at Fond du Lac. Mr. Carlton owned about eighty acres on the St. Louis river, adjoining Fond du Lac, on which he resided until his death, December 6th, 1863.

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Mr. Watrous came to the head of the lake from Ashtabula county, Ohio, with George E. and William Nettleton. He was then young, and a man of more than ordinary attainments and force of character. Although a new member, he was elected as speaker of the first house of representatives. He was appointed register of the United States land office at Buchanan, St. Louis county, in March, 1859, and held that office until January, 1860. He then returned to Ohio. He died in California in 1897.

In the next session of the state legislature, in 1860, St. Louis, Lake, and Carlton counties, constituting the Twenty-sixth legislative district, were represented by Thomas Clark as senator, and William Nettleton as representative. Mr. Clark was a civil engineer. He came from Toledo to Superior, Wis., in 1854, and was employed by the Superior Townsite Company to survey and plat that city. It was customary in those days with the residents of Superior to live in Minnesota on a claim or townsite. Like other inhabitants of that city in those days, Mr. Clark became interested in the location of cities and towns in Minnesota, and therefore concluded that he ought also to have all the benefit of an actual resident. In 1857 he became interested in the location of Beaver Bay, in Lake county, 251 which was, in May of that year, incorporated: by special act of the territorial legislature, by designating the location only as "the territory as surveyed by Thomas Clark" in Lake county. When elected in 1859, he claimed Beaver Bay as his residence. Mr. Clark died in Superior some years ago. He was a good and upright citizen and a faithful representative of Minnesota in the legislature.

William Nettleton, who a few years ago was an honored citizen of St. Paul, but is now a resident of Spokane Falls, Wash., and his brother George E. Nettleton, now deceased, came to Superior, Wis., in the winter of 1853-'54, with the St. Paul colony, which was composed in part of Hon. R. R. Nelson, D. A. J. Baker, Col. D. A. Robertson, B. W. Brunson, R. F. Slaughter, and others. The Nettletons took part in the settlement of Superior, and in 1855, with Col. J. B. Culver, were carrying on a large grocery, provision, and general supply store there. In 1858 William Nettleton became an actual resident of

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Duluth, or at least of that part of it then known as his preëmption claim. He was the first person to file a preemption statement in the United States land office at Buchanan. He proved up his claim and obtained title on August 10th, 1858, to the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 22, and the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter and the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of section 27, all in township 50, range 14, now a part of the First division of Duluth. In the winter of 1853-'54, George E. Nettleton obtained from the Indian Department of the government a trader's license, under which he acquired title to lots 2 and 3 and the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter and the southeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 27, township 50, range 14, being the remainder of that part of Duluth known as the First Division.

When the crash came and the bottom fell out of the first "boom" in Superior., in 1857, George E. Nettleton left and, returned to Ohio, where he resided until his death a few years ago.

William Nettleton, with his family, continued an honored resident of Duluth, aiding materially in its growth and development, until about the year 1878, when they removed to St. Paul.

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At the session of the legislature in 1860, of which Messrs. Clark and Nettleton were members, a new apportionment was made, reducing the number of members from thirty-seven in the senate and sixty-nine in the house to twenty-one in the senate and forty-two in the house. In this change, St. Louis, Lake, and Carlton counties were put in the Third district, with sixteen other counties of northern Minnesota. These counties comprised, in area, almost half of the state, and were entitled to only one senator and three representatives. This was a severe blow to the future prospects, as far as legislative aid and assistance was concerned, of northeastern Minnesota. The lake counties, being comparatively without votes, remained without a member of the legislature for ten years, and they had to pay for a substitute member if they desired any legislation. During

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these ten years the counties of Stearns, Crow Wing, and Morrison, having the most votes, controlled and monopolized the election of all the members of the legislature from the district. In 1871 they permitted the lake counties to have one representative in the house. In November, 1870, Luke Marvin of Duluth was elected a member of the house, and took his seat on January 3rd, 1871. At this session of the legislature, northeastern Minnesota was more fittingly recognized. A new apportionment was adopted, enlarging the membership of both houses, to forty-one in the senate and one hundred and six in the house. St. Louis, Lake, Carlton, Itasca, and Cass counties constituted the Twenty-ninth district, entitling them to one senator and one representative.

Luke Marvin, now deceased, with whose name I will conclude my reference to members of the legislature as such, was born in Leicestershire, England, in 1820. He came to the United States in 1842. He removed from Cincinnati to St. Paul in 1850, where he engaged for about eleven years in the boot and shoe business, both wholesale and retail. He was for a term or two, a member of the common council of that city, and part of the time president of that body. In 1861 he was appointed by President Lincoln as register of the United States land office at Portland (Duluth), and moved to Duluth with his family in 1861. He served as register for eight years; he also, during most of that time, held the office of county auditor for the county of St. Louis. On becoming a resident of Duluth he at once took an active part in the advancement of the interests of Duluth and St. Louis county. Having a large acquaintance with leading men in St. Paul and other parts of the state, he soon became quite efficient and influential in promoting the location and the active construction of the Lake Superior and Mississippi railroad from St. Paul to Duluth. In the year 1855, when a resident of St. Paul, he, in connection with E. F. Ely, before referred to, and H. W. Wheeler, also one of the early pioneers of Minnesota, and now and from that time a resident of the present city of Duluth, became interested in the location, settlement and development of the townsite of Oneota, which in those early days vied with Duluth as the "city of destiny" at the head of the lake in Minnesota. Mr. Marvin died an honored

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resident of Duluth on April 10th, 1880, leaving Mrs. Marvin and seven children, five sons and two daughters.

Mr. Wheeler was the first who, as engineer and superintendent, erected and operated a sawmill at the head of the lake. Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler are two of the very oldest and most respected residents of the city and county now left.

### **DULUTH AND OTHER TOWNS PLATTED AND INCORPORATED.**

“Clifton, Superior County, Minnesota Territory,” as it is named by the record of its plat in the office of the register of deeds of St. Louis county, was platted by J. S. Watrous on October 31st, 1855. The survey was made by Richard Relf in October, 1855. It was the first townsite platted of land in St. Louis county. It was located on the north shore of lake Superior about nine or ten miles from Duluth. The plat of the townsite showed two long parallel piers or breakwaters extending for hundreds of feet into the lake, indicating a commodious harbor; but it was all on paper; the name was the only existence that Clifton ever had.

Early in the winter of 1855–'56, steps were taken for the platting of Duluth by George E. and William Nettleton, J. B. Culver, and Orrin W. Rice, all of whom then lived in Superior, and Robert E. Jefferson, who resided as a squatter on the land covered by the plat of Upper and Lower Duluth, on Minnesota point. This point, a beach formed by the lake, is 254 quite narrow, and over six miles long, forming a natural breakwater which protects the harbor of Duluth and Superior from the waters of the great lake. Through this beach, near its junction with the north shore, in 1870, the canal, as an entrance to the harbor, was cut.

In February, 1856, these gentlemen were canvassing anxiously among some of the learned citizens of Superior for a suitable name for their embryo city of destiny. Rev. Joseph G. Wilson of Logansport, Ind., then sojourning at Superior as a home missionary, under the home mission board of the New School Presbyterian Church, was appealed to, to suggest a name for the future city. Mr. Wilson, who that winter lived with the writer

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and his family, informed me that he was promised two lots by the proprietors in the new town, in case he would suggest an appropriate name Which they would accept. He asked for any old books in my possession, which might mention the name of some early missionary or noted explorer in the lake Superior country, but I had then but a few books and not of the kind required. Mr. Wilson set about his task to earn the reward of the deed of the two lots in the great city. He visited the homes of citizens that he expected might be possessed of a library, and in his search found among some old books belonging to George E. Nettleton, an old English translation of the writings of the French Jesuits, relating to themselves and the early explorers and fur traders of the Northwest. In this he ran across the name of Duluth, along with others of those early traders and missionaries who visited the head of the lake in the remote past. With other names, that of Du Luth was presented by Mr. Wilson to the proprietors at their meeting one evening in the home of George E. Nettleton, and after discussion of the relative merits of the several names submitted, the name Du Luth was selected.

Mr. Wilson wrote an article giving a brief account of Du Luth, and his history, noting the fact that he was one of the earliest explorers who visited Minnesota and the head of lake Superior. That article was published in the Superior Chronicle, the first newspaper published at Superior, Wis. There was no public celebration or demonstration on Minnesota point or anywhere else in honor of the adoption of the 255 name, as some Duluth people have claimed. There was little or no thought at that time that Duluth would ever attain to the world-wide fame and rank which it now has. Superior was then generally regarded as the future great city to be at the head of the lake. Even Oneota then outranked Duluth and claimed to be the Minnesota city of destiny on the lake.

In November, 1857, the writer abandoned Superior and located at Oneota, where he built a house and remained until December, 1865, when he moved to Duluth and occupied the Jefferson house (plate IV), without let or hindrance. All the houses then in Duluth were unoccupied, and had been so for three years, allowing the writer a perfect freedom of

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selection. The name Duluth, in 1865, was all that was left to the town on the point, and even that, with the post office, had been appropriated by Portland.

In May, 1857, Duluth as then platted was incorporated as a town, by an act of the territorial legislature. William Nettleton, Joshua B. Culver, Robert E. Jefferson, Orrin W. Rice, and William Ord, were constituted as a board of trustees, and designated as the town council of Duluth. On March 1st, 1858, the townsite, as platted, was entered at the United States land office at Buchanan, by these trustees, under the act of Congress relating to the entry of townsites on government land.

In 1855 three other townsites were platted within the area of the present city of Duluth, and in 1857 they were incorporated and boards of trustees appointed. These towns were Portland, Oneota, and Fond du Lac. James D. Ray, Clinton Markell, Daniel Shaw, N. B. Robbins, John I. Post, Joseph Gregory, and Albert McAdams, composed the town council of Portland.

Lewis H. Merritt, president, Wm. E. Wright, recorder, and F. A. Buckingham, J. R. Carey, and Dwight Abbott, trustees, were the first town council of Oneota. Their first meeting was held on July 6th, 1859.

In October of that year there was a town election by which Rev. James Peet (Methodist), E. F. Ely, Nels Larson, F. A. Buckingham, and J. R. Carey, were elected trustees. These were the trustees that entered the townsite at the United States land office and made a distribution of lots to the respective 256 owners. Oneota was the only one of the four towns that held an election for officers under their act of incorporation of which there is any record. The writer is in possession of the original record of the proceedings of the meetings of that body up to August 17th, 1861, at which time it practically ceased to exist. F.A. Buckingham and the writer are the only survivors of either the first or second council. Mr. Buckingham held and proved up on a preemption claim embracing the northeast quarter of section 33, township 50, range 14, now a part of Duluth proper, Second division.

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His claim shanty was located at Twelfth avenue west and Superior street. Mr. Buckingham is now a resident of Illinois.

I have before referred to the names of the persons who composed the town council of Fond du Lac. These several bodies, under the congressional townsite law of 1844, "proved up" their townsite claims (to use a common phrase) at the United States land office, and paid for the land embraced in their several plats.

Clinton Markell and the writer are the only representatives of the membership of any of those town councils now residents of Duluth. Mr. Markell, in 1856, then a resident of Superior, became interested as one of the proprietors of Portland. He aided materially in the early development of the town. He assisted in the location and construction of the Lake Superior and Mississippi railroad to Duluth, and came to live in Duluth in 1869. Two years afterward he was elected and served a term as mayor of the city, and is yet one of its active and public spirited citizens.

Duluth, though narrow and point-ed in its infancy, was possessed in a large degree of the power of absorption. It has swallowed up and is now in the process of assimilating six separate towns that had at one time municipal organization, first, Portland in 1870, then Lakeside in 1893, West Duluth and Oneota in 1894, and New Duluth and Fond du Lac in 1895. There is now no more territory for Duluth to. take in on the Minnesota side of the harbor, without climbing the hills, which she is rapidly doing. She has followed out her first start in extending in length rather than in width; so now there is nothing more for her to do but to cross the bay to a dead level, and broaden out in the middle by taking in all

FIRST FRAME HOUSE IN DULUTH Build by Robert E. Jefferson .

257 the Superiors, on the other side. Would it not be a union that would be a benefit for both cities, should the future decree its accomplishment?

## BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES OF PIONEERS.

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Col. Joshua B. Culver, as an early resident of Duluth, deserves more than a passing notice. He was born in Delaware county, New York, September 12th, 1829. He came to Minnesota in 1848, and was engaged in the Indian trade on the upper Mississippi until 1855, when he removed to Superior. Wisconsin. He remained there until 1857, when he removed to Duluth as one of its proprietors. He was that year appointed the first postmaster of Duluth, and held this office in his residence on the point. He was also appointed by the governor the first clerk of the district court. In December, 1859, after the United States land office, in May of that year, was removed from Buchanan to Portland, he was appointed register of that office, which position he held until the appointment of Luke Marvin in May, 1861. On the breaking out of the war of the rebellion, Mr. Culver removed to Michigan, where he helped to organize the Thirteenth Michigan regiment of volunteer infantry, with which he went as adjutant, and soon succeeded to its command as colonel. He served with his regiment through the war with the highest honors, being in the latter part of the war brigade commander under Generals Buell, Rosecrans, and Thomas. After the close of the war, in 1868, he returned to Duluth. In March, 1869, he was appointed by the board of county commissioners the first county superintendent of schools. At Duluth's first city election, on April 4th, 1870, he was elected its first mayor, and continued as one of its most honored and leading citizens until his death on July 17th, 1883.

Robert Emmet Jefferson, whose squatter's claim on Minnesota point received the talismanic name "Duluth," also deserves mention. Mr. Jefferson in 1855, then a young man, not yet twenty-one years old, left his parental home near St. Anthony Falls, Minn., for the head of lake Superior, hoping, doubtless, that he might "get in on the ground floor" in the rush to own all or a part of the great prospective city. He it was that built the first frame house in Duluth, which was known for many years as the Jefferson house. It was intended 17 258 as a hotel or boarding house, and is yet in existence, as shown in Plate IV. In it was held the first session of the district court of St. Louis county. In 1869 the house was purchased by Dr. Thomas Foster, who had the year before removed from St. Paul to Duluth. The house was known for some years after as the "Foster house." It is

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yet where it was first built, on the take side of Lake avenue south, about 500 feet north of the canal. Mr. Jefferson, in the sale of his claim to the parties who platted it as "Upper and Lower Duluth," received some money, besides some interest in the townsite. He was married in 1859. In August, 1861, after the breaking out of the civil war he left Duluth, with his wife and baby girl, for his old home in St. Anthony Falls, going back by way of the Grand Portage of the Fond du Lac, up the St. Louis and East Savanna rivers, down the West Savanna and Prairie rivers into Sandy lake, and down the Mississippi to St. Anthony. Before starting on their trip, Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson and baby stopped with the writer at Oneota while preparing for the journey. It was considered by all that it would be an extremely tedious and dangerous one for Mrs. Jefferson and the baby; yet there did not seem to be any other way for them to get out of the country. In that year, although there were not many people at the head of the lake, those who remained had very little left after the panic and bursting of the boom in 1857. There was no money in the country, nor any employment that would afford a living. It was one of those "fish and potato" years, when the people had to resort, in part at least, to the Indian style of living. Mr. Jefferson was without money, and therefore could not go around by the lake route, nor could he pay \$35 fare by stage by way of the military road to St. Paul. He was not as well prepared for the trip as Du Luth was two hundred years before. Yet he concluded to undertake it. After a long and perilous journey, he safely reached his old home. On his arrival he found that his two younger brothers, Rufus H. and Ernest R. Jefferson, had left home and enlisted in the First Minnesota regiment to fight for the Union.

Many citizens of Minnesota and all the people of Duluth are doubtless familiar with at least some of the history of Ernest R. Jefferson. He was eighteen years of age when he 259 entered the army, and he went with the regiment until the greatest battle of the civil war, at Gettysburg, where he lost a leg. He came to reside in Duluth in 1869, and has so continued up to the present day. He is now a member of the city council, and has held other city and county offices at different times.

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Soon after returning to his old home, Robert E. Jefferson also enlisted in the Union army, was taken sick, and died in the service during the early part of the war. Not long after the death of her husband, Mrs. Jefferson also died, leaving the little girl, Harriet A., who was born in June, 1860, in the Jefferson house in Duluth, being doubtless the first white child born in the old town of Duluth. Most probably also were she and her mother, the first and only white females, who made the 372-mile trip over the "Le Duc" route, from St. Anthony to Lake Superior. She is now Mrs. L. A. Pinkham of Lake View, near Tacoma, Wash. I may say here, lest I may be called to account about the priority of birth in the present city of Duluth, that Miss Jefferson was not the first born in the territory now composing the city of Duluth; the writer's oldest daughter, Ida, now Mrs. C. T. Greenfield of Auburn, Cal., was born at Oneota on November 20th, 1857, and there may be others at Oneota or in other parts of the city whose births antedate Miss Jefferson's.

James D. Ray, one of the proprietors and incorporators of the town of Portland, came from Ohio to Superior, Wis., in 1856, where he resided for three years. He then returned to Ohio, where he remained until the year 1866, at which time he came back to Portland to live. On taking up his residence in Duluth, Mr. Ray became one of its most prominent and zealous citizens in promoting and developing its resources. He was ever generous and public-spirited. He died at his home in Duluth, at the age of seventy-three years, on the 27th day of April, 1894, mourned by all who knew him.

George R. Stuntz came to the head of the lake in the year 1852, and during that year he surveyed and definitely located a portion of the northeastern boundary line between Minnesota and Wisconsin, starting from the head of navigation on the St. Louis river at Fond du Lac, and running south to the St. Croix river. He was born December 11th, 1820, in Albion, 260 Erie county, Pennsylvania; was brought up on a small farm to the age of nineteen years, receiving a common-school education; and at twenty years continued his studies by attending Grand River Institute in Ohio, where he took a two years' course in mathematics, chemistry, engineering and surveying. Before coming to the head of

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the lake, Mr. Stuntz had been engaged as a deputy United States surveyor in surveying land in Wisconsin. He has probably surveyed more government land than any other man now living, as he has been engaged in that business for more than fifty years. His surveys have covered principally the previously unknown parts of northeastern Minnesota and Wisconsin. From important and valuable information voluntarily supplied by him, many have become rich, while he, withal, in his old age, is poor, and well deserves a pension from the government. He platted many townsites, yet I know of none that he ever owned or in which he was largely interested. He has been a continual resident of St. Louis county since 1853, at that time locating at the lower end of Minnesota point, where he built a dock and warehouse, and where in 1855-'56 he carried on a forwarding and commission business under the name of G. R. Stuntz & Go. In these years, Stuntz's dock on Minnesota point was the only landing place from steamboat and sail vessels for passengers and freight destined for Superior, Wis., to which place they were shipped across the bay in Mackinaw boats. Mr. Stuntz came to live permanently in Duluth in 1869, where he has since resided. He has held the office of county surveyor for several terms.

### **THE FIRST BOOM, FOLLOWED BY DEPRESSION IN 1857.**

History and experience would seem to indicate that, whenever a new and unexplored region of country, or a point of natural commercial advantages where exists any hope of wealth or gain is brought to the knowledge of the American people, nothing can prevent in such country or location a boom,—a boom in population, a boom in wealth and values, and in fact a boom in everything but in food, raiment, and good morals. It was so at the head of the lake from 1852 to 1857. In the winter of 1855-'56 food was short. It was too soon for a crop of potatoes, and the people lacked knowledge and experience in the art of catching fish and living on them. Toward spring in 1856, flour brought as high a price as fifty cents per pound at retail, but that figure was paid only for the contents of a few sacks that were packed on men's backs from "Chase's lumber camp," on the St. Croix river, a distance of about sixty miles. Other food supplies were scarce and high in price, in proportion to flour. In the fall of 1857, the bottom, yes, and the top also, fell out of all

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the booms at Superior and at all other points at the head of the lake. Three-fourths of the people left the country, by every means of exit that were then available. Some, with gun and pack, "shot their way out." Some who had families, and who were without means to pay their passage on boats, were taken out free by the generous and charitable captains of the few steamboats that in those days visited the head of the lake. Sound money, or any money, was then very valuable; a corner lot in Duluth was not worth a pair of boots. In October of 1857 the writer, then doing business in Superior, refused to trade two pairs of boots with Orrin W. Rice for two lots in the now famous city of Duluth. The writer believed that, in view of the approaching winter, the two pairs of boots were a better asset than the two lots.

For about eight or ten years after this, the people that were left had to live by barter, by adopting more of the Indian mode of making a living. They did not despise capturing the beaver, the mink and the muskrat, and they traded their furs for flour, pork, and other necessities, which they were able to get in exchange from the few merchants and traders that were left in Superior. There were no stores then in Duluth or anywhere else on the north shore. The settlers on the north shore in Minnesota were compelled to go to Superior by boat in the summer and on the ice in winter for everything in the line of clothing and provisions, with the exception of what they could produce or capture at home.

One of the first deaths at Duluth that I can now recall to mind was the drowning, in 1859, of a young man by the name of Welter, who lived with his widowed mother and brother upon a preemption claim near Oneota. About the 12th of November, after St. Louis bay had frozen over, the ice being yet quite frail, young Welter was compelled to cross the bay 262 in the morning to go to Superior for something which the family needed at home. On his return toward evening he broke through the thin ice. His body was recovered within two hours, by use of a boat, and efforts were made to bring him back to consciousness and life, but without avail.

### **FIRST SAW AND GRIST MILLS.**

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In the winter of 1856–'57 a small sawmill was erected at Duluth by the townsite proprietors. It was situated where the canal is cut through the point. The mill was not a paying enterprise, and after running it a year or two it was abandoned.

Oneota, with its immediate neighborhood, was from the start, in 1855 to 1869, the largest settlement on the north shore in Minnesota. In 1855, Wheeler, Ely, and their associates, built a good and fair-sized steam sawmill, adding to it in 1856–'57 a planer and lath and shingle attachments. A mile above Oneota, in 1857, at what was then known as Milford, another good steam sawmill was built by Henry C. Ford, of Philadelphia, Pa., now deceased, who held a preëmption claim of eighty acres at that point. This tract was subsequently platted as the Fourth division of West Duluth. In a year or two, to this mill was added a grist mill attachment, where the settlers who were industrious enough to raise any wheat or other grain, had it ground. These two mills were kept in operation intermittently in sawing the pine on lands in the immediate vicinity until about the year 1866, when they ceased running because of the total lack of any demand or market for lumber. Mr. Ford left the country and returned to Philadelphia about the year 1860. The Milford mill soon became a wreck, and it was finally destroyed by fire in 1868. The mill at Oneota remained silent until about the year 1868, when it came into the hands of R. S. Munger, then of St. Paul, who removed to Duluth in 1869, and in 1870 the mill was destroyed by fire.

From the year 1857 up to the year 1870 the surplus product of these two mills, and also salted fish, a few droves of cattle driven through in the summer from the region of the Mississippi to Superior, and what was left of the products of the fur trade, comprised the articles of export from the head 263 of lake Superior. I have no means of ascertaining the annual volume of those exports. The two sawmills were of a very moderate capacity. Each would cut no more than 20,000 to 80,000 feet of a mixed class of lumber during a day of ten hours, while running steadily; and, considering delays from various causes, in a month

the daily average would doubtless not exceed more than half that amount. When running steadily each mill employed from six to ten men.

### **EARLY SAILING VESSELS OF LAKE SUPERIOR.**

I am indebted to James Bardon, of Superior, Wis., and to Capt. J. J. Hibbard, one of the early pioneers of St. Louis county and the city of Duluth, and yet an honored resident, and also to Henry W. Wheeler, of Duluth, of whom mention has already been made, each of whom navigated lake Superior, for much of the information relating to early sailing-vessels prior to 1870. The first schooner brought from the lower lakes across the portage at Sault Ste. Marie, was the Algonquin. I am unable to learn at what date she was brought across. When she became known to the people at the head of the lake, in 1855, she was owned and commanded by a captain named Davidson. She sailed on lake Superior for a number of years. In November, 1857, she was chartered at Superior, Wis., by Captain Hibbard, to carry supplies to Burlington bay on the north shore, where he and his brother were about to erect a small sawmill. On her return to Superior she was laid up for the winter. The next season she was not again fitted out, but lay anchored in the bay, being unfit for further service. In the fall of 1858 she was towed to the shore on the easterly side of Quebec pier at Superior, where she quietly rested until a fire that destroyed a part of the pier consumed the upper part of her hull. Some years ago the remains of the hull were removed from their watery and muddy bed, and some of its timbers were utilized in the shape of canes, which were presented to many of the old settlers at the head of the lake; and, to meet a future demand in that line, I am told that an adequate supply of her remains is yet preserved at Superior.

The next boat owned at the head of the lake was the small propeller Seneca, belonging to Thomas G. Barnes of Superior. 264 She ran across the bays and to Fond du Lac until 1861, when she was taken to Ashland.

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The next was a scow schooner named Neptune, hailing from some port on the lower lakes. She was owned by her captain. In 1860 she was engaged in the lumber trade, running from Oneota and Milford to Portage Lake and Marquette. on her first trip out in that year, freighted with a load of dry lumber from the Milford mill, starting down the lake, she was met by a northeaster and driven back, and in attempting to make the entry she ran ashore on the lower end of Minnesota point. The captain and crew were all saved. The captain hired some men at Superior and set them to work to pump her out and try and get her off the sand, After working at her for some time, the men reported to the captain that she had large fish in her hold, whereupon he sold, the wreck to R. G. Coburn of Superior, who, the next day went with some men, and before noon had her off the sand and inside the bay. She was unloaded, hauled out on the point and thoroughly repaired, and was continued in use in the lumber trade from Oneota and Milford to points on the south shore. In 1865 she was wrecked near Eagle river, while under command of Captain Matthews.

Mr. Coburn, with H. M. Peyton, now a prominent and wealthy resident of Duluth and president of the American Exchange bank of Duluth, and E. Ingalls, now deceased, purchased at Oswego, on lake Ontario, another and larger schooner, named Pierrepont. Soon after her advent to the head of the lake on October 22nd, 1865, she, also, was driven ashore on the lower end of Minnesota point by a terrific northeaster. She was driven within a hundred feet of the bay shore on the inside of the point, but fortunately no lives were lost. While in that condition a number of attempts were made to get her off. Mr. Peyton began to get discouraged as to the prospective value of his venture, and sold out his interest to Coburn and Ingalls. Then, in turn, Ingalls also became discouraged, and sold out his interest to H. W. Wheeler of Oneota, on November 1st, 1865. Here was the first interstate ownership of a vessel between Superior and Duluth. Every effort was made to get her off. A channel was dug from the bay to the vessel, when at that time operations for that year ceased. 265 Here I quote a paragraph from the Superior Gazette of December 16th, 1865. "The schooner Pierrepont was moved towards the channel on

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Monday last, some thirty-five or forty feet, but the recent cold snap has caused the ice to form so rapidly that it is more than probable she will remain where she now is till spring.”

In the next spring renewed efforts were made by Coburn and Wheeler, and, after widening and deepening the channel, the schooner was pulled into the bay. In the subsequent improvement of the entry by the United States, it cost thousands of dollars to fill up that canal. The Pierrepont continued in the lumber trade until 1868, when she was sold to Samuel Vaughn of Bayfield, Wis.

In 1864 or 1865, a schooner from Toledo, owned and commanded by Jerry Simpson, now a member of Congress from Kansas, and known as “Sockless Simpson,” made several trips to Oneota and Milford for lumber. The schooner Ford of Ontonagon, owned by Capt. John Parker, made some trips to those places after lumber. In 1868 R. G. Coburn chartered a tug called the Agate, of Ontonagon, and used her in towing scows with stone from Fond du Lac for the government piers at the entry. She was commanded by Cater. Alfred Merritt. This tug is yet in commission at Duluth, and is known as the John H. Jeffrey. In the same year the Stillmanwit plied as a ferry and excursion boat between Superior, Duluth, Oneota, and Fond du Lac. In 1869, Mr. Willard of Ontonagon brought to the head of the lake a side-wheel steam ferry boat named Kasota. She plied between Superior and Duluth, with Capt. George D. Greenfield as master, and his brother, Charles T. Greenfield, as engineer. The same year the small side-wheel steamer Geo. S. Frost, owned by D. Schutte of Superior, was run as a ferry and excursion boat between Superior, Duluth, Oneota, and Fond du Lac. The same year the small steam yacht John Keyes made her appearance. She was purchased by the Lake Superior and Mississippi railroad company, which was then constructing its road, and was used in its service on the bays and rivers, with Capt. George Sherwood, then and now of Duluth, as master. In the same year the tug Amethyst, owned by H. W. Wheeler and R. G. Coburn, was put in service in the harbor.

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The steamers plying on lake Superior, up as far as the head of the lake, before 1870, as nearly as the writer can ascertain through the kindness of Capt. George D. Greenfield of Leadville, Colo., a former resident of Duluth, who was also one of the early navigators on lake Superior forty-five years ago, were the side-wheel steamer India Poline, and, later, the schooner-rigged propeller Independence, the propeller Napoleon, the side-wheel steamer Sam Wead, the propeller Monticello, the propeller Manhattan, and the side-wheel steamer Baltimore, all on the lake before the completion of the Sault Ste. Marie canal. It took the last-named boat six days to bring the writer and his wife from the Sault and land them on Stuntz's dock on June 2nd, 1855. Then, after the Sault canal was opened in July, 1855, the steamers Superior, Lady Elgin, North Star, Keweenaw, Planet, and City of Cleveland, made regular trips from Chicago and other lower lake ports to Superior during seasons of navigation. The year 1869 was marked by an increase in the number of steamboats. Among them were the Norman, Atlantic, Northern Light, Sandusky, Cuyahoga, City of Madison, R. G. Coburn, and Ontonagon.

### **FIRST RAILROADS.**

After the close of the war of the rebellion, the people of the state again awoke to the great importance of the construction of railroads. Land grants from Congress had been obtained for the building of railroads through different sections of the state, one of which was from St. Paul to the head of lake Superior; and in 1861 a charter had been granted to the Lake Superior and Mississippi railroad company.

In 1865, through the influence and efforts of Gen. William L. Banning, James Smith, Jr., John M. Gilman, and William Branch, all of St. Paul, wealthy men in Philadelphia were induced to become interested in this enterprise, and active steps were taken in the survey and location of a route from St. Paul to lake Superior. A land company was organized, known as the Western Land Association of Minnesota, composed of the promoters of the railroad enterprise. Valuable lands were purchased by the company, at and around Duluth

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and other points along the route, at low prices, which became largely enhanced in value after the completion of the railroad.

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In 1867 work was commenced at the St. Paul end of this railroad, and at Duluth in 1869, and the last spike was driven in an all-rail connection between St. Paul and Duluth on the afternoon of August 1st, 1870.

About six years later the road went into the hands of a receiver, and in the reorganization a new company was formed and the name of the road changed to the St. Paul and Duluth railroad. Soon after the completion of the Lake Superior Mississippi railroad, a section of the Northern Pacific railroad was completed from Brainerd to a junction with the Lake Superior and Mississippi railroad at Northern Pacific Junction, now Carlton. The Northern Pacific railroad company, having purchased a half interest in the line of the Lake Superior and Mississippi from there to Duluth, made this city its terminus on lake Superior.

### **FIRST POSTOFFICES AND MAILS.**

The first postoffice in St. Louis county was established at Oneota on June 17th, 1856, with E. F. Ely as postmaster. The first quarterly account current, dated September 30th, 1856, amounted to \$2.46. During fifteen years of the existence of the postoffice at Oneota, the highest quarterly account was \$30.39, on March 31st, 1860. The writer has the original record, and in it are the names of the persons who in 1856 to 1861 were subscribers to papers and periodicals that were received and distributed at the Oneota postoffice.

Before the advent of a railroad, the mail facilities enjoyed by the settlements on the north shore were not of the best. For the first two years, 1855 and 1856, settlers were wholly dependent on Superior, Wis., and the mails received there were few and far between. In 1855 a monthly mail service was allowed by the government from Taylor's Falls to Superior, a distance of about 125 miles. The route was through the forest wilderness on a blind trail. The mail was carried by packing it in Indian fashion on the backs of the carriers.

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I remember that in the fall of 1855 one of the carriers on the route got lost in the woods and wandered for a number of days exhausted and almost famished, before he reached an outlet to civilization.

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In the summer such a mail service was practically worthless. The mails received at Superior by steamboats from the lower lake ports, although irregular, were our main dependence. Superior, Wis., was the terminus for all passenger business at the head of the lake from 1855 to 1869, nearing the time of the completion of the Lake Superior and Mississippi railroad, when docks were built. at Duluth.

After the work on the government road to Superior was so far advanced as to make it passable, a stage was put on from St. Paul to Superior. On January 1st, 1857, a contract was let by the government to Charles Kingsbury and William Kimball for carrying a weekly mail to Superior and a semimonthly mail from Twin Lakes, in Carlton country, to Duluth, stopping and supplying the postoffices at Pond du Lac and Oneota. At the same time a contract was let for a monthly mail from Superior to Beaver Bay, Lake county.

On the first of January, 1858, the service from Twin Lakes to Duluth was increased to a weekly service. In 1863 Superior obtained a tri-weekly service, and in 1865 the Twin Lakes route to Duluth was abandoned, and in its place a semiweekly service was established from Superior to Duluth, and weekly service from Duluth to Fond du Lac, supplying the Oneota postoffice.

I desire here to give what Mr. Sidney Luce says as to the first postoffice and the early postmasters of Duluth. He is yet in the land of the living, at Kingsville, Ohio, on the farm where he was born, his age being now past seventy years. In June, 1857, he came to Duluth, or rather to Portland, in which townsite he was part owner. He built the first dock and warehouse on the lake shore, outside of the point, near the lake end of Third avenue east. The warehouse was built up from the westerly end of the dock, extending

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up two stories, about to a level with the top of the lake bank. Then, partly on the bank and extending out over the warehouse, he erected his two-story dwelling house, where he lived for about eleven years, when the premises were sold to the Lake Superior and Mississippi railroad company. In the front of the dwelling house was a large room devoted to the public use, which for many years was used as the Duluth postoffice, United States 269 land office, register of deeds office, and the county auditor's and county treasurer's offices. Mr. Luce wrote, under date of March 25, 1897, in reply to inquiries for information to be used in this paper:

The friendships I formed in Duluth seem very dear to me at this distant day, and I hall and greet them all with pleasure, renewing the scenes of the active and best part of my life. It is now over twenty-three years since I left Duluth with my family. ... My recollection is that the postoffice at Duluth was established in 1857, with J. B. Culver as postmaster, and was kept in the building north of the canal, occupied by Horace Saxton for some years. Culver held the office until he was appointed register of the land office. He then resigned and I was appointed, my commission bearing date October 1, 1860. I held the office until after my appointment as receiver of the land office in May, 1861. I recommended R. E. Jefferson as my successor, and the papers were sent on for execution; but in the meantime he enlisted in the army and did not qualify, and I kept on acting as postmaster for some time afterward, when inquiries were made by the postoffice department why Jefferson had not qualified. I reported the facts In the case and recommended the appointment of Gilbert Falconer, who was duly appointed and qualified, but the entire management and control of the office was left with me, and I continued to act for him for some years, I cannot say just how long, probably to some time in 1868, Mr. Luke Marvin acting for him a while before the appointment of Richard Marvin as postmaster. There never was any postoffice called Portland. The land office. when it was removed from Buchanan, was called the Portland land office, but the postoffice always was Duluth. The change in the name of the land office, from Portland to Duluth, was made on my application.

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The present city of Duluth is probably the only city in the United States (unless we should except Greater New York) that is entitled to the distinction of having had at one time a "star route" mail service between two of its parts. In the year 1866, the writer was a successful bidder for a weekly mail service between Duluth and Fond du Lac. The bid was at the rate of two dollars a trip, a distance of about fifteen miles one way, or thirty miles for the round trip.

There was no road nor even a good trail between Duluth, Oneota, and Fond du Lac, except what nature made, the St. Louis river in the summer and the ice on it in the winter. The bidder, after his eight years' experience in navigating the land and water of St. Louis county, logging in the woods, 270 working in the sawmill, farming, and performing the duties and enjoying all the emoluments and honors of probate judge, United States commissioner, and postmaster, all at the same time, deemed himself well equipped with necessary qualifications for a mail carrier.

In addition to the writer's official qualifications, he was equipped with that which was vastly more necessary, a boat for summer and his large Newfoundland dog, "Duff," for winter travel. Not many dogs mentioned in history deserve more commendation than Duff. During the winters, when not carrying mail, he was employed in hauling wood from that part of the present city of Duluth between First and Second avenues west and Superior and Second streets to the writer's home on the point in Duluth where he then lived, or in bringing supplies from Superior, or taking his master or mistress to visit a neighbor. He would carry the writer's children across the ice on the lake about a mile to school in Portland. He often made the trip on the ice from Fond du Lac, stopping at Oneota, to Duluth, with his master and the mail bag in the sled, in less than two hours. Duff toiled thus faithfully for ten years. It is hoped that the writer may be pardoned for taking up so much space in mentioning this early Duluth mail carrier.

It would seem incredible that for fifteen years, within the present city of Duluth, the United States mail had to be carried on a trail, by packer and dog train, yet such is the fact. From

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1855 to 1870, the mail was carried in that way between Duluth, Oneota, Fond du Lac, and Twin Lakes. The writer can certify, from actual experience, that the mail carriers of those days were compelled to face and undergo extreme dangers and hardships.

### **DECREASED COLD OF RECENT WINTERS.**

During the past ten or fifteen years the extreme cold and rigor of our winters have materially modified. In the early days, forty years ago, the cold of our winters was steady, dry, and uniform. Moccasins could be worn without having wet feet, from the middle of November to the first of April. It was almost the rule to see ice on the lake until the first of June. The writer knew of two men getting off a steamboat 271 that had been stuck in the ice for several days, on the 9th of June, almost forty years ago, and walking to shore on the broken ice a distance of six or eight miles. Our winters are now much—milder than in the early days. We are not now surprised to see all the snow disappear in midwinter and to have it rain. Such extremes would have been surprising thirty or forty years ago.

### **VOLUNTEERS FROM ST. LOUIS COUNTY IN THE CIVIL WAR.**

The writer is able to give the names of only a few of the sixteen patriotic volunteers of St. Louis county, who, during the civil war, without hope of reward, except the conscious pride of the performance of a patriotic duty, responded to their country's call.

Besides Col. J. B. Culver, before referred to in this paper, who was one of the sixteen, I remember six others. Two of them are yet residents of Duluth, Freeman Keen and John G. Rakowski. Mr. Keen was born in Oxford county, Maine, on November 20th, 1831. He came to the head of lake Superior in April, 1854, and in the fall of that year settled at Oneota. At the first call for 75,000 men by President Lincoln, he took a steamboat for Detroit, and at once enlisted in the First Michigan Battery. He zealously followed the fortunes of that battery through three long years of hard fighting, taking part in all the

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battles, which were many, in which it was engaged. In the fall of 1864, Mr. Keen returned to Oneota, where he has since lived.

John G. Rakowski was born March 24th, 1824, at Königsberg, East Prussia, Germany. He came to the United States in 1855; and came to St. Louis county in September of that year. In 1861 he enlisted in Washington, D.C., in the Eighth New York regiment of volunteer infantry, and served with it for three months. Then he enlisted in the Eighth Ohio volunteer infantry. He took part in many battles, from the first battle of Bull Run to the siege of Petersburg. After the close of the war he returned, in 1865, to his preemption claim just west of Rice's point, now in the Second division of Duluth.

Julius Gogarn, a German, whose history or military record the writer is unable to give, enlisted in a Michigan regiment in 1861. He lived near Oneota, back on the hill on his preemption claim, of which he made final proof and obtained his 272 title before leaving to enlist. He is now an honored citizen of Wetmore, Alger county, Michigan.

Robert P. Miller, after whom Miller's creek was named (which runs through a part of the city of Duluth), enlisted in the Fourth Minnesota regiment in December, 1861. William C. Bailey, who resided on his homestead adjoining Oneota, with his wife and a large family of children, enlisted in the Fifth Minnesota in 1862. A part of his homestead is known now as Hazelwood addition to Oneota. The only other St. Louis volunteer, whose name I can recall, was Alonzo Wilson, who was enrolled in November, 1861, in Brackett's cavalry battalion of Minnesota.

### **THE TOWN OF BUCHANAN AND THE LAND OFFICE.**

The townsite of Buchanan, St. Louis county, named after James Buchanan, then candidate for the presidency of the United States, was platted in October, 1856, by William G. Cowell. The survey and platting were done by Christian Wieland, then one of the best civil engineers at the head of the lake. It was located on the shore of lake Superior, southwestward from the mouth of Knife river. Like many other paper towns on the north

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shore, it never amounted to anything. Cowell never obtained title to the land embraced in the townsite. It was a wilderness while the land office was located there, and it became still more so after the removal of that office to Portland. The land embraced in the townsite was afterward entered by purchase from the United States.

In 1857, the United States land office was located at Buchanan. In May, 1859, it was removed to Portland, but unfortunately there was no suitable building that could be obtained in Portland for office room, so a small story and a half frame building was erected by William Nettleton and J. B. Culver on the Nettleton claim, nearly on the site of the old first election log shanty. The land office was kept there until the appointment of Marvin and Luce as register and receiver in May, 1861. Then the land office was removed into the general office room in Mr. Luce's residence in Portland, where it was kept for eight years, until the appointment of Ansel Smith and William H. Feller as officers. The old building, after the land office was removed, was occupied as a residence 273 for a short time in 1861 by Judge John Dumphy, who was the register of deeds of St. Louis county in 1859. He also held the office of judge of probate for some years thereafter, and is yet an honored resident of Duluth.

It was in that old land office building that the first public school for the Duluth School District No. 5 was kept in 1862. The same building was also used, in the years 1866 to 1868, as the headquarters of Mr. Mayhew, Prof. H. H. Eames, and others, upon their return from their explorations of the north shore of lake Superior and the Vermilion lake country. That old building is also entitled to still greater fame. It was in it that Masonry in Duluth had its birth, when, on the evening of the 10th of April, 1869, the Palestine Lodge No. 79, A. F. and A.M., held its first meeting. The years since that time have witnessed the healthy and steady growth of Masonry in Duluth, springing up, as it were, "from the little acorn to the mighty oak."

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In 1870 the old building was moved down from its historic site to Superior street about seventy-five feet east of the corner of First avenue east. It was enlarged and for a time it was occupied by Frank McWhorter as a fruit stand, and was afterward destroyed by fire.

### **FIRST SERMONS AND CHURCHES.**

After Rev. W. T. Boutwell's sermon at the Fond du Lac trading post in 1832, the next preaching that we have any account of was a sermon delivered at Oneota by Rev. J. G. Wilson, then of Superior, in the month of October, 1855, in the log boarding house. In 1856, a frame building was erected between First and Second streets and a little east of Fond du Lac avenue, according to the plat of Oneota, by the proprietors of that townsite for public use as a schoolhouse and a place for the ministers of all denominations to preach the gospel to the inhabitants of Oneota and neighboring settlers. A bell for this building was donated by B. W. Raymond, a wealthy merchant of Chicago. Rev. James Peet, a Methodist minister, came to Oneota in 1857, and remained until 1861, preaching there and at other points, including Superior. After Mr. Peet left, Rev. James Pugh, of the same denomination, came and preached there for a year or two. After Mr. Pugh left, ministerial preaching was quite limited at all points on the north shore until 1869.

The first sermon in Duluth was preached by Rev. John M. Barnett, a Presbyterian minister of Superior, on a Sunday afternoon in July, 1856. His congregation was not very large. The writer was one of the number, having accompanied him in a flat-bottomed skiff from Superior. His pulpit was at the head of a table in the dining room of the sawmill boarding house; kept then by Mr. Newell Ryder and his family, which house was afterward owned and occupied as a residence by the writer. It was some years ago destroyed by fire.

There were no church organizations established in Duluth or in St. Louis county prior to 1869. The early settlers of St. Louis, Carlton, and Lake counties were a law-abiding and Christian people. They lived for fifteen years without churches, but not without preaching, without doctors and lawyers, but not without medicine and law.

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The churches established in Duluth in 1870, with their seating capacity, are reported are follows: The Methodist church, seating 400; the Presbyterian, 400; the Baptist, 300; the Congregational, 300; the Episcopal, 300; and the Roman Catholic, 200.

On the first day of June, 1869, the first Presbyterian church of Duluth was organized by the Rev. W. R. Higgins, now deceased, who was the Presbyterian minister at Superior. Mr. Higgins had then for about three years also preached and ministered to the people of Duluth. The writer is in possession of a copy of a diary kept by Mr. Higgins, which was kindly furnished by his son, Alvin M. Higgins, now one of the leading attorneys of Terre Haute, Ind. To an old timer this diary is intensely interesting reading. In it Mr. Higgins makes mention of many trips on Sunday afternoons, both in summer and winter, across the bay to Duluth to preach and minister to its people.

### **SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS.**

The first meeting of the board of county commissioners of St. Louis county was held on January 4th, 1858, at the office of R. H. Barrett, then acting as register of deeds, at Stuntz's warehouse at the lower end of Minnesota point. There is no record that the board had a clerk. Without transacting any 275 business, the board adjourned to meet at Duluth on the 19th. At this meeting in Duluth (no meeting place named) a petition was presented for the formation of a school district for Oneota and vicinity. Six school districts were created at that meeting. No. 1 was for Fond du Lac and vicinity; No. 2 was for that part of the country where New Duluth now is; No. 3 was for the neighborhood of Spirit lake; No. 4 was for Oneota and vicinity; No. 5 for Duluth and Portland and vicinity; and No. 6 for the lower half of Minnesota point.

The early pioneers did not neglect the future of the rising generation. Schoolhouses and teachers came before churches, and as soon as the preacher. After the missionary schools taught at Fond an Lac by Mr. Ely in 1835, and by Rev. J. W. Holt and wife in 1849, before referred to, the next was a school taught by Miss N. C. Barnett, a sister of Rev. J.

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M. Barnett of Superior, Wis., in the summer of 1856 at Oneota, where, every year since that date, a school has been taught. The next school was one taught for a short time in the summer of 1861 by a Miss Clark, a daughter of David Clark, who then lived in the Culver house in Duluth on Minnesota point. During 1862 and 1863, a public school for the Fifth district was taught in the vacant United States land office building on "Nettleton's claim." Next was a school in a small building in Portland, situated about where the Ray block stands, east of Fourth avenue east and Superior street, Duluth. Then in 1866 a larger building was erected in the block between Third and Fourth avenues east on the lower side of East First street, also in Portland, where a school was regularly kept until after the new birth of the city of Duluth in 1870. This building was also used until 1870 for religious services and public meetings.

The first enrollment of children between the ages of four and twenty-one years, reported to the county commissioners, was from the school trustees of Oneota school district on January 3rd, 1859. The number reported was thirty-eight children. In 1860 a similar report was made of forty-nine children.

The first report from the Duluth school district was on January 28th, 1861, but the commissioners' record does not give the number.

The total enrollment of children of school age in St. Louis county in the year 1865 was 87, being 49 boys and 38 girls.

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On February 12th, 1861, the school funds apportioned to Oneota and Duluth school districts, in the hands of the county treasurer, were \$75.40 for the Oneota district, and \$37.70 for the Duluth district. Those old days were the days of small things. Contrast the receipts and disbursements of the Independent school district of Duluth, which now embraces the territory of those first six school districts, as shown by its treasurer, for the year 1897, namely, total receipts in the general fund, including teachers' wages,

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\$348,250.73; besides the building fund, \$28,856.09, and the sinking fund, \$107,043.32. The number of pupils enrolled in 1897 was 9,613; and the total value of school buildings and furniture, \$1,800,700.

### **LOCATION OF THE COUNTY SEAT.**

From the year 1855 to the year 1862 the fact of any location of the county seat of St. Louis county was a disputed question. There was no law locating it, nor any existing record that it had ever been located by the board of county commissioners, that body having been empowered to do so by the law. It was contended by the Duluth people that it was located on Nettleton's claim, on the main shore at the base of Minnesota point, by the board of county commissioners, but no record of such fact was ever found. If any such action was ever taken, it may have been by the board of county commissioners of Superior county, of whose acts, if they ever held a meeting, no record was preserved.

For a number of years, persons who were fortunate or unfortunate enough to be elected to any county office were not questioned as to their right to hold their office at their homes, wherever they lived. For two years a majority of the county offices were held at Oneota. For four years the clerk of the district court held his office at his home at Fond du Lac. The county commissioners were a rambling body in their places of meeting.

After the year 1862, it was generally conceded that Duluth was the county seat. Now, even if Duluth's undisputed possession of the county seat for thirty-six years should be questioned, there is no point at the head of the lake that can raise an objection, because she has spread the county seat over twenty-five miles, embracing all the towns, from Clifton, in 277 the old county of Superior, to the "Grand Portage of the Fond du Lac," the head of navigation on the St. Louis river.

### **BEGINNINGS IN THIS COUNTY AND THE CITY OF DULUTH.**

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The first county auditor of St. Louis county, Mr. Edwin H. Brown, was elected in October, 1858, receiving only one vote, and that vote was his own. On November 1st, 1858, he appeared before the county board of supervisors, then in session at the house of E. C. Martin in Portland, and was recognized as the clerk of the board. He was, at that meeting, required to give an official bond in the sum of \$1,000. He held the office for fourteen months and received only \$32.20 for his services. The first yearly salary fixed by the county board for the county auditor was on July 12th, 1861, at \$200.

On January 14th, 1861, the board of county commissioners, in session as a board of equalization, equalized real estate values for taxation as follows: "The land on the shore of the lake and bays of St. Louis and Superior and their immediate vicinity" was fixed at \$3 an acre, and "land farther back" at \$2 an acre, and townsite lots were left as the assessors valued them, at \$1.25 a lot. In September, 1862, the same board fixed the values of the same classes of land at \$2 and \$1.25 an acre, respectively, and fixed the values of all platted lots in the towns of Duluth, Rice's Point, Oneota, and Fond du Lac, at \$1 a lot.

In the year 1860 the total valuation of personal property in St. Louis county was \$9,620; in 1861 it was \$4,726; in 1862, \$5,000; in 1863, not reported; and in 1864, \$2,179. The total real estate values for 1860 were \$96,836.76; and for 1864, \$108,927.00.

In the year 1870 the population of St. Louis county was 4,561, of which number Duluth had 3,131. Carlton county had 286 inhabitants; and Lake county, 135. In the same year the total valuation of real and personal property in St. Louis county was \$220,693; the total taxes levied, \$7,955; and the total debt, \$5,212.

The first deed recorded in the office of the register of deeds of St. Louis county was a quitclaim deed from Rion H. Bacon to Edmund F. Ely, for the townsite of Oneota. It was recorded on June 6th, 1856, and the consideration was \$1,500.

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The record of the first couple married in Duluth is typical of the union of Duluth and Portland: "By Rev. J. M. Barrett (of Superior, Wis.), on April 12th, 1859, William Epler, a resident of Portland, and Jennie A. Woodman, resident of Duluth," in the presence of J. B. Culver and E. C. Martin.

The first issue of a newspaper published at Duluth was the Duluth Minnesotian, April 24th, 1869, with Dr. Thomas Foster as editor. He came to Duluth the year before from St. Paul, where he had for some years edited the St. Paul Minnesotian. The office of publication of the Duluth Minnesotian was an old building on the westerly side of Lake avenue, about a block north of where the canal now is. The paper soon passed from the doctor's control, and in a few years it ceased to exist.

The remarkable growth of Duluth dates from its first city charter, granted by an act of the state legislature, approved March 6th, 1870.

At the first city election, held on April 4th, 1870, there were 448 votes polled, of which Col. J. B. Culver, Democrat, had 241, and John C. Hunter, Republican, had 205, for mayor, with two scattering votes. George C. Stone was elected as the first city treasurer; Orlando Luce as the first city comptroller; and Henry Silby as the first city justice. All the other officers were appointed by the mayor and city council.

This paper has extended far beyond the limit at first designed by the writer, when he undertook the task. It records portions of the early history of Duluth and northeastern Minnesota which may be of interest to coming generations.

For the time since the birth of the new city of Duluth in 1870, the writer hopes that some one of the many of its residents who have lived in the city from that date, having better qualifications for the work than he, will write the history of its struggles during its first ten years, and of its steady and substantial growth since 1880 to the present time.